

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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R 160808Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3397

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON BALUCHISTAN

SUMMARY: IN ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON BALUCHISTAN, OPPOSITION REITERATED CHARGES OF UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND ILLEGAL ACTS BY GOP AND OF OPRESSION BY ARMED FORCES WITH IRANIAN SUPPORT. REPLYING FOR GOVERNMENT, BHUTTO DENOUNCED TRIBAL SARDARI SYSTEM, PROMISED CONTINUATION ECONOMIC-SOCIAL REFORMS, AND SAID HE WOULD PROPOSE SOLUTION TO PROBLEM AFTER ISLAMIC SUMMIT IN LAHORE. ONE PASSAGE IN PRIMIN'S SPEECH HINTED AT SPREAD OF INSURRECTION TO BUGTI TRIBAL AREA. END SUMMARY

1. LONG AWAITED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON BALUCHISTAN

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WAS FINALLY HELD FEBRUARY 14, WITH BHUTTO MAKING ONE OF

HIS INFREQUENT APPEARANCES AT ASSEMBLY TO WIND UP THE DISCUSSION. AT CONCLUSION OF SEVEN-HOUR DEBATE, ASSEMBLY ADJOURNED SINE DIE. DEBATE TOOK PLACE WITHIN FEW DAYS OF FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF DISMISSAL NAP-JUI GOVERNMENT IN FEBRUARY 1973, WHICH MARKED BEGINNING OF "BALUCHISTAN PROBLEM" FOR GOP.

2. DURING COURSE OF DEBATE, OPPOSITION FORCEFULLY PRESENTED ITS FAMILIAR THEMES: DISMISSAL OF NAP-JUI GOVERNMENT BY BHUTTO WAS UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND ILLEGAL; SUBSEQUENT ARREST AND DETENTION OF OPPOSITION LEADERS WAS BLATANT DENIAL OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS; ARMY IN PROVINCE WAS OPPRESSING AND HARRASSING POPULACE; IRANIAN AIRCRAFT WERE ASSISTING IN THIS OPPRESSION; ETC. OPPOSITION DEMANDS WERE ALONG EQUALLY FAMILIAR LINES: RELEASE OF DETAINED PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS, RESTORATION OF NAP-JUI GOVERNMENT, WITHDRAWAL OF ARMY FROM PROVINCE.

3. BHUTTO, IN HIS REBUTTAL, CONCENTRATED PRIMARILY ON AN EXTENDED DENUNCIATION OF THE SARDARI SYSTEM ITSELF, (I.E., THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM OF BALUCH TRIBAL ORGANIZATION UNDER TRIBAL LEADERS KNOWN AS SARDARS). HE ARGUED THAT BALUCHISTAN PROBLEM WAS NOT ONE OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN BALUCH PEOPLE AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BUT BETWEEN GOP AND HANDFUL OF SARDARS WHO HAD REJECTED MODERNIZATION AND EXTENSION OF CIVIL AUTHORITY OVER THEIR DOMAINS. PRIMIN CLAIMED HIS GOVERNMENT HAD LONG BEEN SEARCHING FOR POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM, WHICH PREDATED INDEPENDENCE. HE POINTED TO HIS APPOINTMENT OF NAP PROVINCIAL GOGYRNOR AND ACQUIESCENCE IN FORMATION OF NAP-JUI GOVERNMENT IN 1972 AS EVIDENCE HIS GOOD FAITH. OPPOSITION, HOWEVER, HAD USED PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCES TO EQUIP TRIBAL ARMIES AND HAD THEM PROTESTED WHEN PAK MILITARY PRESENCE HAD TO BE BROUGHT IN TO PUT DOWN TRIBAL FIGHTING. DISMISSAL OF THIS GOVERNMENT WAS REQUIRED FOR SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF COUNTRY, BHUTTO DECLARED. ONCE DISMISSED, THE DISCREDITED SARDARS TOOK THEIR FORCES TO THE HILLS IN EFFORT TO DISRUPT LAW AND ORDER.

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4. CONTINUING, BHUTTO DESCRIBED HIS UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO REACH POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITH THE SARDARS AND SAID HE HAD COME TO CONCLUSION THAT ANY VIABLE SOLUTION IN BALUCHISTAN MUST ATTACK THE SYSTEM ITSELF RATHER THAN DEAL WITH A FEW INDIVIDUALS. TO THIS END, HE CLAIMED, GOP AND NEW PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT HAD ACHIEVED REMARKABLE RESULTS IN ONE YEAR, ESTABLISHING FOR FIRST TIME IN PAKISTAN'S HISTORY AN ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

COVERING THE WHOLE PROVINCE; AND BUILDING AN INFRA-STRUCTURE OF ROADS, SCHOOLS AND MEDICAL FACILITIES.

5. ONCE TYRANNY OF SARDARS WAS BROKEN AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OPENED UP, BHUTTO ASSERTED, PROBLEM WOULD BE SOLVED. YOUNG GUERRILLA FIGHTERS IN THE HILLS WERE NOT AGAINST GOP, HE CLAIMED, BUT WERE FIGHTING ON ORDERS OF THE SARDARS JUST AS THEIR FATHER AND GRANDFATHERS HAD FOUGHT. THEIR CHILDREN WILL NOT HAVE TO BE SO ENSLAVED, HE PROMISED.

6. CONCLUDING HIS REMARKS, PRIMIN SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT SOLUTION TO BALUCHISTAN PROBLEM WAS NEAR AT HAND. HE WAS STILL WILLING HOLD DIALOGUE WITH OPPOSITION AND EVEN TO PERMIT OPPOSITION FORM PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH DEMOCRATIC PROCESS PROVIDED THEY UNDERTOOK TO "FREE THE PEOPLE OF BALUCHISTAN FROM THE SHACKLES OF THE SARDARS". ONCE THE ISLAMIC SUMMIT WAS OVER, HE DECLARED, HE INTENDED PUT FORTH A SCHEME FOR SETTLEMENT THAT HE HOPED WOULD BE APPROVED BY THE NATION.

7. COMMENT: DEBATE INDICATES THAT IN THE YEAR SINCE DISMISSAL OF NAP-JUI GOVERNMENT IN QUETTA, THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE EVOLUTION IN POSITION OF EITHER SIDE. MAIN NEW ELEMENT IN DEBATE WAS BHUTTO'S ALL-OUT ASSAULT ON SARDARI SYSTEM ITSELF, WHICH SUGGESTS HIS PROMISED POST-SUMMIT SOLUTION WILL INVOLVE MEASURES AIMED AT DISMANTLING THE SYSTEM.

8. IN ONE POSSIBLY SIGNIFICANT PASSAGE OF SPEECH, BHUTTO SPOKE OF ARMED OPPOSITION COMING FROM "ONLY THREE POCKETS" IN BALUCHISTAN: MENGAL AND MARRI TRIBES PLUS PORTION OF BUGTI TRIBE. TO BEST OUR RECOLLECTION, THIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IS FIRST TIME GOP LEADERSHIP HAS MENTIONED RESISTANCE IN BUGTI AREA. HITHERTO, IT HAS BEEN UNDERSTOOD THAT OPPOSITION WAS CONFINED TO MENGALS AND MARRIS. NOT CLEAR WHETHER THIS SIGNALS SOME SPREAD OF RESISTANCE TO INCLUDE BUGTIS IN WAKE GOVERNOR BUGTI'S SPLIT WITH GOVERNMENT. BYROADE

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